
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Fights for More Teachers, Increased Pell Grants and School Modernization
Honda Stresses that Education is a "two way street" during House Debate on U.S. Budget

Washington DC— Today, former teacher and U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) was at the center of the debate on how the United States should spend its money on education over the next ten years when Honda's amendments to the education spending bill were offered as part the Democratic budget proposed by Rep. John Spratt (D-SC). Honda's proposal would increase the maximum Pell grant award to \$4,350, and would provide \$29 billion for teacher recruitment and training and \$25 billion for school modernization over the next ten years.

"As we consider the important issue of what to expect from our students and teachers, we must understand that accountability in education is a two way street," said Honda. **"We cannot expect our schools to excel if we do not provide adequate funding to recruit, train and pay qualified teachers. We cannot expect our students to excel if we do not provide them with 21st century technology and modernized classrooms."**

Honda first introduced his education budget proposal last week as a member of the House Budget Committee, as it debated the spending priorities for the United States for fiscal year 2002. The Honda proposal, which is part of the Democratic budget presented on the floor today, would increase the maximum amount of the Pell Grant by \$600—to \$4,350 for 2002— by providing \$25.1 billion over the next ten years. Pell grants provide financial assistance to needy students so that they can attend college and are used by one in four post secondary students in the United States. The Republican budget resolution would only raise the maximum Pell Grant by \$150, falling \$1.5 billion short of Bush's campaign promise to increase Pell Grant funding.

Honda's proposal would also provide \$29 billion for teacher recruitment and training over the next ten years, including \$18.4 billion in new funding to provide supplemental pay to qualified teachers in high-poverty schools. Honda's proposal also secures \$10.6 billion to keep the Class Size Reduction Program on track by hiring 100,000 new teachers over seven years. The Republican budget provides no funding for Class Size Reduction.

The Honda proposal provides for a tax credit to pay the interest on almost \$25 billion in bonds to build and modernize over 6,000 public schools during the next two years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, one-third of all schools, which serve 14 million students, need extensive repair. The U.S. General Accounting Office estimates that more than \$100 billion is needed to bring those classrooms into adequate condition. The Republican budget provides no funding for school renovation and actually guts current funding by allowing states to retroactively divert \$1.2 billion in 2001 school renovation funds to other education programs.

The Democratic Budget failed on a party-line vote.